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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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In the last issue I dealt with an article by Professor Robert N. Corwin, Chairman of the Committee on Entrance Examinations of the Sheffield Scientific School, printed in the Yale Alumni Weekly for March 20. It was a pleasure to incorporate in that editorial some remarks by the New York Times. We owe still more to this journal for two further discussions of Professor Corwin's letter which have appeared in its editorial columns.

Under the title, Answering a Foe of Latin, The New York Times, on Saturday, April 4, in one of its minor editorials, wrote as follows:

A reader who evidently doesn't think much of Latin as a part of modern education makes against some recent commendation of that language, printed on this page[1], the point that the commendation itself had to be, or at any rate was, expressed in words the greater number of which were not of Latin origin. Selecting a single passage, he finds in it twenty-two Latin words and sixty-six that would be called Anglo-Saxon. So he wants to know what warrant there was for calling Latin "the muscular part" of English.

On looking over these lists one notices that the shorter one contains not a single duplication, while the other has so many that if they were removed it would cease to be the longer. Yet our critic insists that the Anglo-Saxon words were those that gave "motion and driving power" to the sentences he analysed—that, therefore, they were the "muscular part" and Latin merely the bones.

We cannot ourselves see it in that way. There is not much "motion and driving power" in such words as "is", "a", "and", "but", "it", "the", "of", "to", "there", "shall" and "should", "that", "whose", "still", and "nevertheless", and the like. Yet these words comprise the bulk of the non-Latin words which our correspondent groups together.

There is a lot of what Mayor Mitchell calls "bunk and moonshine" in the talk about pure Anglo-Saxon. In the 513,000 words presented by the Standard Dictionary in its latest edition, a few thousand only are Anglo-Saxon, and of these the ones most frequently used are of the kind that make the skeleton of the language—the very articles and connectives which our critic has enumerated. Within this flexible skeleton, material has been assimilated from almost every language under the sun to make up the real meat and tissue of English. The bulk of the importations, however, has been from Latin and its offshoots, French, Spanish, and Italian. Some of the short Saxon words are pithy and expressive, but often for sheer power and always for variety of expression the Latin is superior.

[1] The reference is to the remarks on Aristocracy and Latin from the Times in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 7.178.

Attention may be called here to an elaborate analysis of the Latin element in English, printed in The Literary Digest for January 25, 1913, and incorporated by Professor Lodge in an editorial in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 6.137-138.

On Sunday, April 5, under the caption The Latin Requirement, The Times took up again, editorially, the letter of Professor Corwin. We give the editorial in full:

That the four-year Latin requirement for admission to Yale College "has now become almost unique"; that most of the high schools "except those within Yale's sphere of influence" have either dropped or sidetracked this subject, and that Yale is restricting admission from the high schools, and in consequence snobbishly encouraging admission from the special fitting schools, was the contention of the Chairman of the Committee on Entrance Examinations in the Sheffield Scientific School, printed in the Yale Alumni Weekly, of March 27. Some one has gone after and searched these statements, and in the current issue of the Yale Alumni Weekly the facts are produced.

Examining the catalogues of twenty-one of the leading older endowed institutions with which Yale is classed, it is found that Dartmouth, Williams, Amherst, Boston, Brown, Columbia, Princeton, and Johns Hopkins have the four-year Latin entrance requirement; that five of the women's colleges, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Vassar, and Bryn Mawr, maintain it; and three years' preparation in Latin is required at Harvard, Bowdoin, and Trinity. Tufts requires two years. Only two universities, Cornell and Pennsylvania, confer the B.A. degree with Latin as an elective. At Bowdoin and Harvard, which require only three years' preparation, it is found that 60 per cent. of the candidates for the class of 1917 presented the full four years.

"Dead" Latin is not so moribund it seems, as Greek. The high schools furnished students at the nine colleges entering with the four-year requirement in quotas ranging from 25 per cent at Princeton to 60 per cent. at Columbia, 70 per cent. at Dartmouth, and 80 per cent. and more at Amherst. If these pupils come within "Yale's sphere of influence", certainly the five or six thousand students at women's colleges, all of whom must have a four-year course, are not within that influence. The girls come from all over the country. While 48 per cent. of the new students at Vassar during the last four years were from public high schools, only 41 per cent. were prepared at private schools, the remainder having had training at both. At Wellesley 64 per cent. of the two lower classes were high school pupils, 32 per cent. from the private schools; at Smith the proportions are 63 per cent. and 30 per cent. among sophomores, which is about the average for all women's colleges.

At Mount Holyoke 82 per cent. of the students come from the high schools.

As a component part of the English language, Latin is very much alive—a fact that the schools and colleges seem to realize. It will not do for the opponents of its study to make reckless and ignorant statements about it. C. K.

## CORRESPONDENCE

May I make a brief reply to some of the strictures made upon my paper?

About the Introductions, I confess myself overwhelmed. Under such conditions as you describe, they are an obvious necessity. I should like, however, to call attention to a qualification which I made, not at all as a *captatio benevolentiae*, but in all sincerity. In many school-editions, the condition of having a personal contribution to make has been amply fulfilled. I can testify that from more than one edition I have received abundant information and stimulus.

That Dr. Forbes has totally mistaken my meaning is doubtless my fault. If the Introduction, in the form in which it is generally found, is necessary at all, it cannot well avoid being a compilation. So, to a certain extent is Rohde's Psyche, or Croiset's History of Greek Literature, as well as the articles in the various Dictionaries. My point is that where Smith or Harper or the Britannica is available, the Introduction often adds nothing, even in the matter of exposition. If no one of these is within easy reach, my contention loses its force.

But it was the Notes and the Vocabularies that principally concerned me, and, here again, I have obviously failed to make my position clear. I did not object to the Notes because they are too full or too scanty, too elementary or too erudite, but because they are the wrong kind. They do not seem to me to deal with the difficulties that confront the pupil, and I suggested, quite "constructively", what notes, in my opinion, would deal with these difficulties.

As far as the Vocabularies are concerned, my criticism of them is based upon the very considerations that Dr. Forbes advances. It is because a knowledge of English is not to be presumed, that they are largely futile. We are committed, I take it, to the doctrine that the best way of learning English is by mastering Latin, not by learning lists of English words. If only the simplest meanings are given, as they are in Professor Lodge's vocabulary, the pupil is under compulsion to recast the whole sentence into English, —not merely select a fitting word here and there.

Finally, I feel bitterly aggrieved at Professor McDaniel's comment. Can he really maintain, *ex animi sui sententia*, that I have failed to be specific, or that I have been wholly destructive?

MAX RADIN.

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL, ELMHURST, L. I.

Your editorial of March 14 comes to some of us like a challenge. We talk big, you imply, about teaching Latin as literature, but few of us tell how we actually manage[1]. May I take up the gauntlet you have thrown? I teach only preparatory work, but I like to think I make some of it more than a mere task, and that some, at least, of my pupils enjoy their Vergil as poetry and literature. Here are some of the things I actually do with that end in view.

To begin with, I believe that the class should understand from the start that the Aeneid is poetry, that it can be read as poetry, and that it is beautiful music, even if they understand not one word of it. And so we begin to scan the first thing. I used to put off the scanning for a while, and then take it up at odd moments when I had a little extra time. But the class seemed to think the scanning a sort of side-show which they could visit if they had time and money left after seeing the main circus. So now we always spend a week or more upon scansion before doing anything else. I have them work together at the blackboard, I drill on the rules of quantity, I require daily written work, which is carefully corrected and returned, and each day I *read* a page or two as accurately and rhythmically as I can. In this way I am sure the pupils come to realize that *Arma virumque cano* is not cut by the same pattern as *Gallia est omnis divisa*. I do not try to get the class to *read* metrically at first. They all learn to *scan* accurately (and, by the way, I prefer a text with unmarked vowels); all realize that I am reading poetry, and gradually some learn to read well for themselves. Some never do, I admit, but they can't read English poetry either and so I don't worry.

Is this literary training? I think it is. At least I am satisfied when one tells me that he *hears* the sadness in *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt*, and when another *sua sponte* catches the lullaby in *suadentque cadentia sidera somnos. Tune ille Aeneas quem Dardanio Anchisae* must be scanned as well as read if beginners are to see in its slow heavy spondees how the poet managed to express Dido's overwhelming wonder. She could talk fast enough when that was gone: *alma Venus Phrygii genuit Simoentis ad undam.*

Surely no translation can do justice to Juno's speech in the first book: *Mene incepto desistere victam.* Her hatred of the Teucri fairly hisses out through those *s's*: her wounded pride comes out with the emphatic *me*. Do you not yourself love to read that passage *Hinc atque hinc vastae rupes scopulique minantur?* How smooth and calm it is after the ruin of the sky which preceded them. Here in the beautiful lines the reader can find rest, even as did the weary ships.

The other day we were reading Dido's speech in Book 4. *Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum?* Those broken sentences, those long lines, those emphatic *me's*, all show poor Dido's distraction, and how can you translate them? Nay, you must *read* them. "Are you fleeing from me", translated the student. "MENE fugis?" I interrupted. "Is it from me you flee?" he corrected instantly. Did he not give it the literary touch? I don't care if he had seen it so rendered in the notes. He caught the meaning from the reading.

Another thing I do which helps the class to enjoy the work. I read them all the English poetry I can. The story of the *iudicium Paridis* comes first, and Tennyson's Oenone tells it beautifully. The same author's Tithonus and Vergil, Shelley's Arethusa, Longfellow's Enceladus and those clever travesties of John G. Saxe are some of the poems I always read. I keep in my school-room desk prose translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey. I read Homer's

[1] Miss Carver misunderstood, I think, the editorial in question. It was not directed against the vast body of teachers who go silently about their business—but against those who, on the one hand, draw indictments against all—or most teachers—for failure to do their work well, and, on the other themselves fail to show how the desiderated improvement is to be effected. C. K.